



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL™
INYUVESI
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DURBAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

5 September 2018

Dear Alumni and friends,

Talk on the Persistence of Wildlife in Urban Areas – A KwaZulu-Natal Perspective by Prof Colleen Downs



Urbanisation is one of the most forms of anthropogenic landscape consequences on biodiversity form space from complex natural

damaging and rapidly expanding modification and is having profound worldwide. Urban environments trans-diversity to artificial uniformity or a mosaic of green remnants and infrastructure. Urbanisation is thought to result in an overall decrease in species diversity and abundance because the changes to the environment become unfavourable for native species. Indeed native species diversity decreases with increasing urbanisation, however overall species abundance does not necessarily decline. There is a shift in species composition from those species that cannot tolerate the urban environment, i.e. urban avoiders, to species which can use urban resources effectively and survive in an urban environment, i.e. urban exploiters. Urban exploiters can survive and in some cases thrive in an urban environment. Urban areas have unique habitats which offer alternate food and nesting sites, in the case of birds and mammals, to those species which can use them effectively. The presentation will discuss whether herp, bird or mammal species that persist are urban adaptors or exploiters in KwaZulu-Natal and various examples will be given.

Professor Colleen Downs is an internationally recognised researcher in biology, particularly terrestrial vertebrate ecology. Her more than 290 international peer-reviewed publications reach a wide audience, helping her meet her goal of furthering and communicating science. She has also been featured on popular platforms such as BBC Earth. Downs is consistently named the top-published female academic at UKZN, and has supervised more than 80 postgraduate students. She holds the South African Research Chair (SARChI) in Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, is a Fellow of the International Ornithologists' Union and a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa. In 2017 she was a nominee in the South African Women in Science Awards and made 2nd runner up Distinguished Women Scientists. Downs is also the BirdLife South Africa's Honorary President for 2016-2020.

Join us for what promises to be a most inspiring and informative evening with wine, juice, snacks and good company afterwards!

DATE : Monday, 22 October 2018
TIME : 17h00 for 17h30
VENUE: Murray Lecture Theatre, (Centenary Building, opposite the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre entrance) Howard College Campus, Durban
COST : R50 per person (payable on arrival)
RSVP : By Monday, 15 October 2018 to Nomcebo Msweli on 031 260 2016 or email: mswelin@ukzn.ac.za

Robin Ralfe
Chairman Durban Alumni Association

